



-----ooOoo-----

NEWPORT (SALOP) URBAN DISTRICT.

I N T E R I M R E P O R T

- of the -

M E D I C A L O F F I C E R O F H E A L T H

- on the -

H E A L T H A N D S A N I T A R Y C I R C U M S T A N C E S

- for -

1 9 3 9.

-----ooOoo-----

I N T E R I M R E P O R T

on the Health and Sanitary Circumstances of the Urban District of Newport (Salop) for the year 1939.

Newport, with its small population and limited environs, does not present in peace time any great problem to the Sanitary Staff in their keeping conversant with and controlling health matters. At the beginning of the year it was hopefully anticipated that, as a result of sound planning in schemes for the advancement of Housing and for modernising Main services, the position would be such that the practical realisation of such schemes would be a matter for the early future. The changed conditions of the country gave a setback to such hopes and, in the reaction which followed, the whole system of public health administration was, for a time, thrown out of balance. While war conditions are a deterrent to constructive health progress - constructive being used for such measures as the building of houses and the renewing of main services where materials have to be obtained - it must be remembered that every endeavour must be made to maintain the routine of administration. The demands of local war precautionary measures have to be given their full share in the daily work, and in many instances, this work has fallen on the sanitary staff. Yet, in spite of these extra calls, there must be no stoppage of such health enterprise as can be dealt with at the time.

POPULATION. Normally the town, situated on an arterial road, has a considerable traffic without this affecting the local population much. A day rise of numbers is to be expected when markets are held, and, in addition, there has always been some incoming from the surrounds to the town which is the chief centre for shopping for the district. Immediately with the onset of hostilities the Council were asked to receive evacuees from the Smethwick suburb of Birmingham. These evacuees, mainly children of the secondary school type, came early in September. Their arrival, disembarkation and dispersal in the area was smoothly and conveniently carried out. A

certain increased sanitary accommodation had to be provided and the billeting had to be carried a little over the urban boundaries, but generally there was no great difficulty. The children were of a good class, settled well with the local youth and seemed to benefit from their stay in the country. The foster-parents made good response to the calls on them and put forward great efforts to make the new-comers comfortable, which, indeed, they appeared to be. While the evacuees put some strain on the resources of the local householders, with their gradual return to Smethwick a respite was gained, but this has been temporary only, as with workers in demand in the surrounding districts, the town has again been called to provide housing, particularly lodgings, and again the accommodation is being taxed to its capacity. In these circumstances a certain amount of overcrowding must exist and it would seem that the powers of the Authority to receive further evacuees, should it be called on to do so, would be considerably diminished by the changed conditions.

LABORATORY FACILITIES. There has been no occasion to make call on the Emergency Health Laboratory which has recently been founded at Wellington.

AMBULANCES. This service has been augmented by additional vehicles supplied through the A.R.P. Scheme.

HOSTELS AND SICK-BAYS. Early in September the Council opened the building formerly used as a Fever Hospital as a reception house for minor ailments and certain forms of contagious illness, but later it was found advantageous to transfer such cases to the Public Assistance Institution. A few minor illnesses, particularly impetigo, were treated.

WATER. The local supply is plentiful and the results of tests are uniformly good. Improvements were carried out on the Pumping Plant and a change of drive to electricity was made. This has increased the capacity of the pump with a resultantly greater flow of water.

SEWAGE. A scheme for modernising the disposal works was prepared and the Council had given it consideration, but any

furtherance of this has had to be postponed until more suitable times.

HOUSING. As stated at the beginning of this Report, the limited area of the town allows control to be exercised with some ease, and, among other works, an exhaustive survey of housing in the district had been made some time before the beginning of the War. Certain steps had been taken to remedy defects and plans had been prepared to meet the requirements of the outstanding cases by building on the Victoria Park. This intention has had to be abandoned temporarily, but when conditions return to normal there is no reason why the Council should have any hesitation in going forward to complete such schemes as are in being and by these means finally eliminating housing deficiencies in the area.

MEAT INSPECTION. Carcases are examined regularly. With the object of centralising the killing and inspection of animals, it is proposed to establish an abattoir in this town using an existing slaughterhouse for this purpose. There seems no reason why this should not be carried out successfully; but, if in addition, the premises have to be used for the reception of casualty animals from the outlying districts, then the question of the adequacy of the accommodation becomes a matter of great importance to the public health authority.

PREPARATION OF FOODS. Premises have been licensed but structural alterations may have to be made in certain cases when conditions will permit.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE. Notification of the regular infectious diseases varied little in numbers from that of 1938. There was a slight increase in Scarlet Fever and a diminution in Diphtheria. The cases of Scarlet Fever occurred averagely throughout the year. With the Order making compulsory the notification of Measles and Whooping Cough there was an immediate response in the case of the former, and, in the latter part of the year, the disease was epidemic particularly in November. There were no cases of Whooping Cough brought to notice. It is pleasing to note that

Diphtheria has been almost absent from the town, but it is disquietening that the number of applicants for immunisation is falling. Every effort must be made to maintain a high standard of protection amongst school children, especially those of pre-school and entrant age. With a constant exchange of population taking place Newport must see that its children are protected from this virulent disease.

W. A. M. STEWART,

Medical Officer of Health.

15th. August, 1940.

-----ooOoo-----